

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) voted in the House Armed Services Committee to send the H.R. 4310, the [National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013](#) (NDAA) through to the full U.S. House of Representatives for consideration. Wittman, Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, weighed in on many issues during the 14-hour consideration of the annual defense policy measure, which concluded early this morning.

“This bill encompasses so many important issues for our nation’s defense: both here at home and across the world, military equipment, weapons, training, personnel and veterans’ benefits,” Wittman said. “It is critical that we equip our all-volunteer force with the best equipment and capabilities across the globe. This bill provides an increase in funding levels from the President’s budget, while still making tough choices and falling below last year’s level of spending.”

The FY13 NDAA that passed through the Committee blocked the Administration’s proposals to increase annual fees to TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Standard, and prevented the establishment of an annual TRICARE-for-Life fee. In addition, the legislation authorizes a 1.7% pay increase and extends bonuses and special pay for our men and women in uniform.

Wittman continued, “Through this bill, we continue to fulfill our nation’s most sacred obligation to those who serve and have served, by preventing a proposal from the Administration to raise TRICARE fees on our veterans. However, the job with defense spending is not finished with this legislation today; more work must be done to stave off “sequestration” cuts, set to take effect in January 2013. I will continue to fight to avoid these catastrophic cuts to our nation’s defense budget.”

In addition, Congressman Wittman successfully included the following amendments and provisions in the bill reported out of Committee today:

Preventing Additional BRAC Rounds

Wittman offered an amendment to prohibit Fiscal Year 2013 funds from being utilized to propose, plan for, or execute any additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) rounds. The amendment passed 44-18 with strong bipartisan support. The Obama Administration proposed two new rounds of BRAC earlier this year in conjunction with his annual budget release.

“BRAC rounds cost more than they save in the near-term and negate the value of deficit reduction, while costing billions of dollars and thousands of jobs,” Wittman said. “We have yet to see any savings from the last BRAC round in 2005, with the closures costing an estimated \$36 billion. That’s a cost we simply cannot afford right now. Strategically, as we draw down after over 10 years of combat operations in the Middle East and shift our focus to balancing the Middle East threat with the emerging security interests and presence of forces in the Asia Pacific, additional rounds of BRAC at this time cannot be justified. I’m pleased the Committee passed this important amendment.”

For more on this amendment, [click here](#) .

Shipbuilding and Seapower

The bill included an additional VIRGINIA class submarine in FY 2014, that was previously removed by the Administration.

“This country must maintain its maritime advantage. With the strategic shift to the Asia-Pacific theater and more reliance on naval forces to maintain stability in the Middle East; the importance of maritime dominance will only become more vital for this nation to protect itself and its interests. I’m pleased this sub was added back into the building schedule,” Wittman said.

In March, Wittman joined with colleagues in efforts to stress the importance of restoring plans to build a second VIRGINIA class submarine in 2014. [Read the letter here](#) .

Afghanistan Prison Amendment

Wittman offered an amendment requiring the Secretary of Defense to issue a report to Congress that assesses the rates and causes of reengagement for former detainees at the Detention Facility at Parwan, Afghanistan who are transferred or released. The report would also include the rationale of the Commander of International Security Assistance Force as to the release of these prisoners.

“It is absolutely critical that the Pentagon and Congress fully understand the factors that influence freed enemy combatants to reengage in combat operations with coalition forces in Afghanistan,” Wittman said. “In light of recent reports that detainees have been released through negotiations with this Administration, I believe recidivism rates and causes must be thoroughly explored in order to responsibly engage in both military and diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan. At the same time, it is essential for members of Congress and the public to understand the rationale behind releasing these detainees from the facility at Parwan.”

For more on this amendment, [click here](#).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.